deposits with the approval of their Board of Directors. However, offering high rate of interest which is not in alignment with market rates, affects the profitability of banks and adds to their liability. Therefore, Urban cooperative banks were advised by RBI in January 2002 to review their interest rate structure on term deposits of different maturities and take appropriate action to make them comparable with the rates offered by commercial banks.

(c) With effect from October 22, 1997, RBI has given freedom to commercial banks to fix their own interest rates on domestic term deposits of various maturities. At present the term deposit rates of different banks are generally between 8% to 9% p.a. However, interest rate on savings deposits is still regulated by RBI and this rate has been fixed at 4.0 per cent per annum since April 1, 2000.

Import duty exemption on appliances for disabled

*428. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation of disabled persons recently met him seeking exemption of import duty and taxes on appliances meant for them;

(b) whether it is a fact that these specific budgetary demands are being made by them for the last several years; and

(c) if so, the details of demand made togetherwith the action taken on each of them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) While no specific demands in respect of import duty exemption on appliances for the disabled appear to have been received in the past, a number of appliances imported for personal use by disabled persons are already exempt from all customs duties. These, *inter alia,* include wheel chairs, braillers and braille instruments, arithmetic and geometric aids, braille watches and

clocks, orthopaedic appliances, artificial electronic ear and artificial electronic larynx.

Production cost of crude oil

†*429. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have assessed the production cost of curde oil being produced in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, what was the average production cost of crude oil produced in various parts of the country during 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002; and

(c) the year-wise landed cost of imported crude oil in India during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) The reported average operating cost per metric tonne (MT) of domestic crude oil, on "oil and oil equivalent gas" basis, produced during the last three years, 1999—2002, ranges between Rs. 538 to Rs. 963 for 1999-2000, Rs. 496 to Rs. 1,111 for 2000-01 and Rs. 435 (provisional) to Rs. 1,010 (provisional) for 2001-02. However, the average cost of production of crude oil depends on various technical factors, both dynamic and static, the accounting policies followed by any individual company and on the fiscal regime applicable.

(c) Foreign exchange requirement against the crude oil import during 1999-2000, 2000-01 and 2001-02 is as follows:—

Year	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02(RE)
Quantity (Thousand Metric Tonne)	57,805	74,097	80,397

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.